

## **EGENHOEFER Rachel Beth (USA)**

### ***Foundations; Textiles as Tangible Codes - paper***

It is mandatory of any computer history anthology to include textiles influence on giant calculators. The Jacquard Loom aside, our computers have evolved not just from the physical punch cards but from the ideology behind the construction of cloth.

From a simple thread we made a stitch; which next to a stitch creates a line; which woven on top of another line begins to make a plane; intersected with other planes constructs space. The rich layers of textiles that fill our runways, homes, accessories and giants, all begin just as stitches.

Just as knits and purls create fabrics, binary digits weave our computers. Numbers next to numbers create code; with which we generate scripts; which write computer programs that run machines. The most complex of engines, also break down to simple zeros and ones knit together.

It is not 'nostalgia, or a critical attempt to salvage forms of cultural expressions' but a mandatory foundation for both contemporary textiles and modern technology to preserve this methodology and end the fetishization with technology as an idea of the new.

Practitioners of new technology are pigeon holing themselves into a ghetto united by their fetishism of the latest technological trends and not by any deeper conceptual, ideological, or aesthetic issues. Creating hyper self-reflexive works fascinated with the new, the shiny, the fast, the trendy.

Textile makers, fashion designers, artists, and computer programmers alike need not to be confused by the definition of technology as the new and modern but rather the definition of technology as a tool a machine and a process. Approaching modern technologies in this light allow us to make works which cross these boundaries, engage in a non self-reflexive dialog, ask critical questions, preserving the traditional and exploring the modern.

Rachel Beth Egenhoefer considers her Commodore 64 Computer and Fischer Price Loom to be defining objects of her childhood. She received her BFA from the Fiber department with a concentration in Video from the Maryland Institute College of Art in May of 2002. The self-proclaimed digital arts nerd formerly worked on the editorial staff of Artbyte Magazine in New York City, and

continues freelance writing on art, modern society, and media culture. In 2001 she was chosen to participate in 'daidalosdreams', an International Arts Symposium of emerging artists in Enschede, the Netherlands. The OPTIONS 2002 Biennial in Washington DC included Egenhoefer among the top emerging artists in the mid-Atlantic region. Simultaneously she presented recent video works at the Corcoran Gallery of Art as a part of the Washington Projects for the Arts Media Series. Her work has most recently been presented in the UK at London's Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) Digital Showcase, and at the boardumresearch Hello World: People vs. Programming Forum. 'Revealed Messages', Egenhoefer's binary chocolate installation will be exhibited at the 2003 Boston Cyber Arts Festival this spring, and at the Big Rock Candy Mountain Artist Residency at the Banff Center for the Arts. Rachel Beth is currently an MFA fellow at the University of California, San Diego and a graduate researcher at UCSD's Center for Research and Computing in the Arts (CRCA). Her work can be seen at [www.rachelbeth.net](http://www.rachelbeth.net).

---